

Solomon Bites The Worm

A Call Of Cthulhu Adventure

Nineteen years ago, Solomon discovered an old tome whilst excavating the remains of a 9th Century monastery. The tome, Liber Carcosa, described a being called Hastur and gave details of an incantation that could be used to strike a bargain with this infernal being. The spell was, of course, Unspeakable Promise.

INTRODUCTION

This adventure is set in present day England, but it can be easily adapted to any rural setting. It takes place on a humid, oppressive day in summer. The adventure is based around the spell Unspeakable Promise and it's terrible consequences. Although the scenario includes a creature from Ye Book of Monstres II, ownership of this book is not necessary for play, though it is helpful. It is fairly easy for investigators to pull through with minimum casualties and sanity loss. The lethality can be significantly decreased by making the stats for the Unspeakable Possessor lower. The scenario is fairly linear and should be fairly easy for new Keepers to keep under control. At least one of the investigators should be acquainted with Lynn Jones, either from an old friendship or previous investigation. It is useful, but not vital for at least one investigator to be proficient in Latin.

PLAYERS INFORMATION

The investigators are called by Mrs. Lynn Jones to investigate the disappearance of her husband, Solomon Jones. If the investigators are connected with the police or some other investigative body (such as Delta Green), they are sent as representatives of that force. Otherwise, Lynn calls the investigators before the police, as she has more faith in them.

Solomon disappeared from Mainwarings, his Somerset country estate two days ago. He was last seen by Lynn in his study, where he spent most of his days. Solomon was an archeologist from Wales and had written several critically acclaimed books on archeology and history as well as fiction based on Celtic Myths.

KEEPER'S INFORMATION

Nineteen years ago, Solomon discovered an old tome whilst excavating the remains of a 9th Century monastery. The tome, Liber Carcosa, described a being called Hastur and gave details of an incantation that could be used to strike a bargain with this infernal being. The spell was, of course, Unspeakable Promise. Solomon, then unsuccessful and impoverished, cast the spell and bargained his soul in return for success in his writing career. Sure enough, Solomon's next book, The Ballad of Gwythen was a huge success. Solomon used his new wealth to accumulate archeological artifacts and old books, including The King in Yellow. As the years wore on, Solomon became increasingly worried about 'the other side' of the bargain that he had made. He finally managed to acquire a Nigerian artifact called the Mgomvi-acha, which he believed could be used to reverse the spell's effects.

This was all for naught, however, because two days ago, whilst working in his study on the acha, Solomon was transformed into a humanoid horror entirely under the control of Hastur. He fled his former home into the estate's woods. Hastur has now commanded 'Solomon' to collect the Mgomvi-acha and deliver it to cultists in Taunton.

ARRIVAL AT MAINWARINGS

When the investigators arrive at Mainwarings at mid-day, Lynn greets them, along with her small dog, Quint. On a successful LUCK roll Quint takes a shine the lucky character and follows him around.

Otherwise, characters must ask in order for Quint to accompany them. Quint is useful, as described later.

The investigators are also introduced to a surly Ivan Hunter, the estate's gardener and the only other person on the estate other than the chipper housemaid. A successful PSYCHOLOGY roll will reveal that Ivan is opposed to the investigator's presence. Mainwarings itself is a gloomy Victorian building of dark red brick, with extensive gardens and grounds, including a wood to the north-east of the house where Solomon is hiding.

Lynn will then take the investigator's to Solomon's study, where he was last seen. The window is open, perhaps wide enough for a man to get through, but Lynn will say that this was normal practice for Solomon. If Quint is with the investigators he begins barking in a most distraught manner and refuses to go near Solomon's chair.

The desk is covered in papers and other objects, including the Mgomvi-acha, and the notes accompanying it. The desk drawers are locked, but a successful LOCKSMITH roll or a roll on the resistance table pitting the investigator's STR against the lock's CON of 10 will open them to reveal, among other more mundane items, a copy of The King in Yellow, complete with sanity-blasting Yellow Sign. Rules for The King are given in the Cthulhu rulebook.

A thorough search of the study will reveal the Liber Carcosa on a successful SPOT HIDDEN roll, hidden high up on the rear bookshelf. The book is in Latin, and as well as describing Hastur and his kin in Hali, gives the spell Unspeakable Promise (Daemonic Bargain). It takes 5 weeks to study and comprehend, as well as a successful LATIN roll. Cthulhu Mythos +5 percentiles, (1/1D6) sanity loss. To get the gist (i.e. it is about Hastur and contains what looks like a Mythos spell called Daemonic Bargain takes 1D6 hours and a successful LATIN roll.

THE MGOMVI-ACHA AND ASSOCIATED NOTES

The acha is a small (about 7 inches high) hardwood statue of a crouching man shaping what looks like a bowl out of a collage of human faces. A successful ARCHEOLOGY or KNOW roll will reveal it to be in the style of the Benin Empire. The underside of the statuette is covered with unusual sigils. Another successful ARCHAEOLOGY roll will reveal them to be in no known language. The people of Benin had no written language, which should spook the investigator who initially identified the statuette.

In fact, the sigils are in the language of the people that built G'harne. A successful CTHULHU MYTHOS roll will confirm this and another CM roll will reveal them to be the steps to an incantation to increase one's magical ability. If the incantation is pronounced (successful CM roll and sacrifice of 3 magic points and 1d4 sanity points) the acha will be activated and become warm to the touch. A successful LISTEN roll will reveal a quiet chanting noise coming from the statuette. The next spell that the caster casts whilst touching the acha will cost half as many magic points (rounded down) as normal for the caster and the spell will automatically succeed if there would otherwise be a chance of failure (such as with summon/bind spells). The acha can be activated only once and it crumbles after being used to power a spell.

Solomon's notes read as follows:

Statuette definitely west African- Benin? Cannot be sure..... Sigils in language unknown NO BENINESE WRITTEN LANGUAGE!!!! Possibility of forgery.....Sigils-incantation?.....cannot translate, must study LC.....LC no help- maybe it is nothing to do with Bargain.... Day of Reckoning draws near, the incantation must work!!!!..... no help, nothing happened, probably forgery.... I await my side of the Bargain.....

LET'S SPLIT UP, GANG!

The investigator will probably want to investigate the rest of the estate. Pertinent locations are described below:

WOODS: If Quint is with them, he will pick up and follow Solomon's trail on a successful LUCK roll. Otherwise, a successful LUCK roll is required to find signs of a large animal, possibly a man, and a successful TRACKING roll is required to follow the trail.

The trail leads to a clearing, where a campfire has been left from the night before. Quint will go crazy in the clearing, barking at the smell of 'Solomon' lingering from the night before. Solomon is no longer there.

IVAN'S SHED: If they search whilst Ivan is there, he will answer questions in a surly manner, revealing little. A successful PSYCHOLOGY roll will reveal that he is telling the truth if he says he doesn't know what has happened to Solomon or if he says that he did not kill Solomon.

If they search whilst Ivan is out, a successful SPOT HIDDEN roll will reveal several hidden photographs of Lynne, some apparently having been taken through the window whilst she was in the shower or otherwise wearing little or nothing. A successful PHOTOGRAPHY roll will reveal that some of the pics are up to three years old.

The shed also contains an axe and a chainsaw, which may come in handy later (see SLIGHT RETURN below!

GARDEN'S: Outside the study window, Quint will shy away as if in disgust, as this is where Solomon escaped following his transformation.

The Keeper should feel free to fill the rest of the estate as he sees fit, with maybe a few red herrings dotted about.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Lynn Jones, Age 44 STR 10 CON 13 SIZ 11 INT 15 POW 16 DEX 11 APP 17 EDU 10 SAN 80 HP12
No damage bonus, combat stats at basic, no weapons Listen: 60% First Aid: 45% Natural History: 60%
Spot Hidden: 55%

A well-preserved, attractive woman in her early forties. Lynn is fairly smart and sports an upper-class accent, but is minimally educated. She also has a marked lack of curiosity and knows nothing of Solomon's work.

Ivan Hunter, Age 50 STR 13 CON 15 SIZ 12 INT 12 POW 12 DEX 13 APP 10 EDU 11 SAN 60 HP 14
Damage bonus +1D4, combat stats are normal Accounting 40%, Natural History 65%, Horticulture 70%,
(Lecherous) Photography 40%, Fast Talk 40% Spot Hidden 60% Weapons: Wood axe, 20%, 1D8+1D4+2
damage

The manor's sullen, introverted gardener. Ivan has long lusted after Lynn, but furtive photographs are his only expression of this. Whilst he had no great love of Solomon, whom he occasionally refers to as 'the old devil' and was jealous of the writer, he could never have killed him. He is a red herring, intended to arouse suspicion in the investigators.

The Thing that was Solomon, Age 46 STR 22 CON 26 SIZ 21 INT 15 POW 35 DEX 14 Move 8 HP 24
Damage Bonus: +2D6 Weapons: Touch 85% Damage 1D10 per round as the creature thrusts its fingers inside the victim's body and drains body fluids. Drained hit points are added to Solomon's STR and SIZ, divided equally. Armour: 5 points of blubber and scales Skills: Climb 65%, Sneak 40%, Hide 30% Sanity loss: (1/1D6) to see; (2/1D8) for Lynn to see what has become of her husband.

Solomon has become an Unspeakable Possessor, which are described in Chaosium's Ye Book of Monstres II. The 'instant death' attack has been omitted in the case of Solomon. Solomon is now an enormous bloated humanoid horror, with rubbery, boneless arms ending in hands with octopoid fingers. His skin is gray-green and warty and his hair stands out in wiry bristles at various locations around his

ghastly form. His face is a bloated parody of his former self, but still recognizable to those who knew him. He emits an overpowering odor of stale grease, which vanishes quickly. It is, however, disturbing to Quint. He is capable only of growls and moans instead of speech.

SLIGHT RETURN

What follows assumes that the investigator's stay the night at Mainwaring's, instead of giving up or jumping to false conclusions that day. Lynn is eager for them to stay, providing a delicious dinner and ample bedrooms, as she is justifiably scared.

At 8:30, as the investigator's are seated in the dining room, finishing their main course, Margaret, the housemaid, runs in crying and screaming. With Lynn's help, she calms down enough to lead them outside. There, the investigator's find the corpse of Ivan on the benighted lawn, drained of all body fluid. This prompts a (0/1D4) SAN roll. Quint, if he is present, will go wild with distress at the scene of the killing. Solomon has snuck back into the gardens and killed Ivan in order to gain size lost with the rising of the sun (see *Ye Book of Monsters II* for further details.) He fled back to the woods soon after, but will return at 11:00 to break into the study and steal the Mgomvi-acha. There are clear signs of a struggle, and investigators succeeding both a SPOT HIDDEN and TRACKING roll will be able to track Solomon back to the woods and confront him. Otherwise, anyone patrolling the manor within a fair distance of the study at 11:00 will hear Solomon break in and can confront him there. Anyone in bed or the other side of the manor must make a LUCK or LISTEN roll at The Keeper's discretion to here him entering. Solomon will fight to the death if cornered- he will NEVER leave the Mgomvi-acha.

ATMOSPHERE

The Keeper should describe how dark and oppressive Mainwarings is. The house is full of antiques, including sinister Polynesian masks, ghoulish Asian statues and even some human skulls from Alaska, along with stuffed animals, often exhibiting very poor taxidermy. The less well-ventilated areas, of which there are many, smell strongly of mothballs. Think of a gloomy Victorian museum and you're not far off.

WRAPPING IT UP

The adventure should end with either the investigators killing Solomon or Solomon escaping with the Mgomvi-acha. Alternatives include the investigators arresting Ivan or running away screaming.

Further adventures can be built on this. If Solomon gets away much fun can be had tracking him down. If the Mgomvi-acha falls into the hands of the Hastur cult all hell could break loose. Lynn could be driven insane by the sight of what her husband has become, which could provide links to adventures involving mental asylums. The Mgomvi-acha was not the only curious artifact in Mainwarings-who knows what secrets could be hiding in it's dark corridors?